

Interview H0032: with Lodrö Chondzin [tib. blo gros chos 'dzin], (Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, China, June 1993) : Part No. 2 of 2

Lodrö Chönzin was a Tibetan government official who was one of the two district heads of Selkar district. He discusses Chushigandru in his area and about relations with Jenkhentsisum in India and how Shakabpa sent a letter to the District Head asking him to turn over the government's arsenal that was stored there.

Thubten Norbu sent a reply by letter from Dingkyi District. It said, 28-29 armed [Khamba](#) horsemen arrived. They are no longer here. They robbed something in this place, but they immediately left via Dingkyi. So you don't need to be worried about that. I sent another letter through 2 people to Dingkyi, saying, "A group of Amdos of [Yabshi](#) have arrived in Shigatse and left, so let me know if they have come to your area as we heard they were headed for your district. Have you heard anything about them coming to your area." We got a reply saying, "5-6 have arrived here, but they are engaged in decent trade. They aren't causing any disturbances." Later, at the time of the reforms, they [Chinese] told me a lot about this and said they came there and they had carried foreign weapons and a telegram. Actually, I didn't know about this, so I just told them that I didn't know.

Q

If the Khambas had not left and if they had wanted grain and such things, what orders did you have from the government about them? Would you have had to attack them or what?

A

We had no orders. We wouldn't have given them the grain because it was stored in the storeroom which was sealed with many seals so we couldn't open them, and I didn't have any private grain. So the only thing I could do is to say that I don't have anything to give you. If they had stayed, we would have told them not to steal from the [miser](#) (serfs). That

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was our own plan. If they did steal, the responsibility would be on our shoulders, so we would have warned them not to steal and do raiding.

Q

If the Khambas told you to give grain and you said no and Khambas start fighting, would the Tibetan soldiers have fought with the Khambas?

A

Yes, they would have. They would do whatever we ordered them. If we said fight, they would fight.

Q

Wouldn't they stand on the Khamba's side?

A

They wouldn't have. They would listen to our orders because they were paid their salary and they were given the guns and bullets and they were obedient.

Q

Did you have to go to collect taxes from Gyanyima?

Q

Yes, Gyanyima was called Kharkhog and we had to go to collect taxes there. The reason why it was called Gyanyima was because it was said to be the trade site of the Trader Norbu Sangbo [tib. nor bu bzang po]. After the trade in Kharkhog was finished, the trade in Chagra [tib. chags ra] would start.

Q

What happened in Shelkar after the People's Liberation Army arrived? Did they arrest you and take you to Lhasa?

A

The soldiers we had, were planned to be sent to Shigatse, and all the weapons in the storeroom and the weapons given to the soldiers were turned in. Also the grain

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in the storeroom in the district was also taken and we were told to hand over all the documents of the district. I was told to go to Shigatse and I was taken sort of as a prisoner to Shigatse. My colleague Menri was left in the district to continue the work. We arrived in one day and one night. All the soldiers, weapons and the documents were taken with me to Shigatse. After arriving in Shigatse, at first, I was taken to the United Front Bureau. Then I was shut in the district headquarters where all the government officials were being kept. I was kept there about 15-17 days. It was like being detained. Then my colleague was brought to Shigatse and arrested. I was sent up with a Work Team.

Q

Were you declared to be sort of not involved in the revolt?

A

Yes. I was then sent with the Work Team.

Q

What happened to Menri?

A

My colleague [his co-district head] Menri was arrested. The reason for this was because he had received a letter in Shelkar from [Shakabpa](#) in India. The letter said, "We have many people and few weapons, so try to secretly give the weapons stored in Shelkar to the people we will send." That's why he was arrested.

Q

Didn't they send the letter to you?

A

This letter had come to Menri before I arrived. After the letter arrived, I heard that two Khambas came to Shelkar District. This was before I arrived. Thus, he was arrested. My colleague had relations with the Dedön Tshogpa [tib. bde don tshogs pa].

Q

You mean [Jenkhentsisum](#)?

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A

Yes. That's why he was arrested.

Q

How did Chinese know about the letter from [Shakabpa](#)? And how did [Shakabpa](#) know of the guns at Shelkar? Did [Shakabpa](#) and Menri exchange letters before that?

A

The weapons in Shelkar Chöde were for the Dingri soldiers and everyone knew about these guns including [Shakabpa](#). After the liberation [1951], the Dingri regiment soldiers were sent home so their weapons were stored in Chöde Monastery. Everyone knew this. At the same time, the "Bodyguard" Gusung troops protecting the north were sent home, and their guns were sent to Shang Ganden Chönkhor. Then there were the troops in Nagtshang who were sent home and their guns were put in Nyemo Gyelje [tib. snye mo rgyal rje] Monastery. Everyone knew this.

Before that, Menri had sent a letter to Kalimpong. There was a person from Shelkar called Lobsang Dorje [tib. blo bzang rdo rje] who went to Kalimpong and he was said to be among the false People's Association members. He had gone there and was staying in Kalimpong, and he might have been saying that he is the representative of the district, Chöde Monastery and the people in Shelkar. Since he took this name, they [the people in Kalimpong] trusted him highly. But since Menri didn't get along well with him, Menri and a person called Lungdo Chömpel [tib. lung rtogs chos 'phel] wrote a letter to Kalimpong saying, "This person is not the representative of the People's Association and he is not a trustworthy person. If you have something to say, write to us directly." This is how their relations with [Shakabpa](#) started. The letter turned up when the Work Team searched all the letters in the district and I was also there with the Work Team.

Q

Before that, they didn't know that, right?

A

Yes.

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Q

How did the Work Team know that Menri received the letter from Kalimpong?

A

Before that, Luntog Chömphel who worked with Menri was arrested and he also had relation with the Shelkar [Uma](#) Khenjung [tib. dbu ma mkhan chung] who was the [tsodra](#) of Shelkar District. The two of them were arrested when I was there and I also knew a small part about it.

Q

Was the idea of [Shakabpa](#) was to give the guns to the [Chushigandru](#) or who was the person to be given the guns?

A

If I would guess, the guns were to be given to the counter-revolutionaries like sort of Khambas or [Chushigandru](#). Otherwise, there weren't people in India, right?

Q

So there were no other people to give the guns, right?

A

Yes. If some soldiers would come from India, they could tell them to give the guns to them, but they didn't have those, right?

Q

Did you ever hear about the U.S. sending agents by plane to Tibet, etc. to support [Chushigandru](#)?

A

I knew only later. At the time, I didn't know. Later, I heard the plane had come to Drigu and Kongpo.

Q

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You didn't hear about that when you were in Shelkar?

A

No.